

OXI DAY

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise proudly to celebrate "oxi" day. The historical significance of this day and what it meant to the outcome of World War II cannot be overstated. The outcome of a decision made on a day in 1940, had a profound impact on the conducting of the war by Nazi Germany. We're talking about a stand made by a small, battered and courageous nation, namely Greece, against the larger, more powerful aggressors Italy and Germany.

By October of 1940, World War II had begun, and the Nazi war machine was already in high gear. Along with Hitler's ally, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, the German and Italian forces were threatening the whole of Europe. European nations were bowing to tyranny and destruction as the Germans and the Italians marched through Europe.

Great Britain endured Germany's aerial bombardment, forcing Hitler to seek another avenue to subdue the British. Hitler intended to eliminate British operations in the Mediterranean in order to weaken their ability to deter German advances.

To achieve this, Hitler needed the Axis powers to strike at British forces in Greece. By conquering Greece, Hitler would gain access to an important connecting link with Italian bases in the Dodecanese islands. This would give the Italians a strangle hold on British positions in Egypt, where British forces were already facing attack from the Italian army in north Africa. The British considered the defense of Egypt vital to allied positions in the oil rich Middle East.

On October 28, 1940, the Italian Ambassador in Athens presented an insulting ultimatum to Greek Prime Minister Metaxas, demanding the unconditional surrender of Greece or Italy would declare war and invade Greece. Mussolini had given the Greek Prime Minister Metaxas three hours to reply.

Prime Minister Metaxas responded with the now historic word "oxi," which means "no" in Greek. His statement embodied the true spirit of the Greek people. His words of defiance echoed the same devotion and love of country that Greek patriots exhibited during their war of independence against the Ottoman empire when they shouted the defiant words "liberty or death." Prime Minister Metaxas' actions marked the beginning of one of the world's most heroic efforts against tyranny and oppression. Italy then invaded.

It is important to note that in addition to Greece having a population seven times smaller than Italy, the disparity in their armed forces was even greater: Italy had close to ten times the firepower of Greece in its army and navy and seven times the troops. Italy's large air force had total air superiority since Greece had a very small defensive air force. However, despite their lack of equipment, the Greek army proved to be well-trained and resourceful. Within a week of the invasion, it was clear that Italian forces were suffering serious setbacks despite having control of the air and fielding superior armored vehicles.

On November 14th, the Greek army launched a counter-offensive and quickly

drove the Italian forces back into Albania. By the next month, the Greeks had captured the town of Pogradec in eastern Albania. The fighting continued for a few more months . . . it was clear that the Greeks were not going to stand for defeat. In a last ditch effort to bring the war to a close before the Italians would be forced to ask Hitler to intervene, they launched another assault on March 12, 1941. After six days of fighting, the Italians had made only insignificant gains, and it became clear that German intervention was necessary.

On April 6, 1941, Hitler ordered the German invasion of Greece. It took the Germans five weeks to finally end the conflict. This delay proved to be critical to the outcome of the war. Italy's inability to capture Greece enabled the British to win major victories against Mussolini's forces in north Africa. This solidified British positions in the region as well as in Cyprus. In addition, it contributed to the failure of the German Barbarossa campaign to conquer Russia.

Due to Mussolini's humiliating defeat by the Greeks in Albania and Greece, Hitler was compelled to capture the Balkans, mainly Yugoslavia and Greece, thus, delaying his Barbarossa plan to invade and capture the Soviet Union before the winter of 1941. The Greek resistance, both in Albania, and in the other famous battle in Crete, altered, favorably for the allies, his Barbarossa time table by at least six months.

Perhaps most importantly, the Germans never gained the advantage against the British. Although Germany had conquered much of Europe, its inability to decimate British and Russian forces early in the war would eventually prove to be fatal. Thanks to the heroic Greek resistance and their countless sacrifices, the war tide had been permanently changed for Hitler due to the delay of this critical time table.

Nearly one million Hellenes died during that time. That was 14 percent of the population in 1940. That is equivalent to losing 39 million people in this country today in the case of a war to defend our country.

The entire Western world, discouraged and fearful of the Axis powers and the growing ugly war, took hope from these incredible victories. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said of the Greeks: "Today we say that Greeks fight like heroes, from now on we will say that heroes fight like Greeks."

Mr. Speaker, "oxi" day is an inspiration to all those who cherish democracy and freedom. It marks defiance against terrible odds. As an American of Greek descent, I am proud to honor the memory of those brave patriots who fought for freedom for themselves and ultimately for all the free world on this important day.

**PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 1461, FEDERAL HOUSING
FINANCE REFORM ACT OF 2005**

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the "Federal Housing Finance Reform Act." This legislation not only address-

es key components to ensure the stability of mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac but it does a great deal more to expand homeownership opportunities for millions of American families.

I am pleased this legislation creates a new and single regulator in the Federal Housing Finance Agency which has expanded strength, including full receivership powers in the event of a financial crisis and independent litigating authority. As these companies have a public mission they must comply with high standards and accountability on their activities.

As the price of housing continues to rise, especially in high cost communities, many families find the opportunity of homeownership elusive. I am pleased this legislation will allow Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae to loan up to the median average of homes in areas of high cost. This provision will help middle class families in Colorado towns such as Minturn, Basalt and Frisco to receive needed resources so they can purchase a home.

I am also pleased the legislation includes an affordable housing fund. This fund would require these mortgage lenders to allocate a portion of their profits for purposes such as down payment assistance and closing costs for low income first time homebuyers.

While this bill has many strong elements it is important to note a significant shortcoming. I am outraged by provisions which subverts activities of nonprofit, charitable, faith based organizations and their affiliates. I find troubling that these groups would not be considered for funding from the affordable housing fund if they use their own funds to participate in political activities such as non partisan voter registration drives and get out the vote activities. This is especially troubling as the Federal Government continues to spend time and resources expanding voting opportunities with the Help America Vote Act and the National Voter Registration Act.

I hope the Senate and conference committee will reject such language to ensure that groups and organizations are not penalized for participation in the political process.

In spite of deficiencies the bill is worth supporting because it is important to strengthen regulations and operations of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. By doing so we continue to provide and further expand the American dream of homeownership to millions of Americans and their families.

**BREAST CANCER AWARENESS
MONTH**

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the observance of October 2005 as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This month provides an important opportunity to raise the level of awareness and education among American women about the importance of annual mammograms and monthly breast self-examinations in the fight against breast cancer.

Like most American families, Long Islanders are all too familiar with the loss of a loved one to some form of cancer. Breast cancer in particular remains the leading cause of death